# What Do I Say Now?

**How to Help Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse**

committee for children®

## Establish a Safe Environment

**Who is with your child?**

Check references for:
- Babysitters.
- Child-care providers.

**Notice the behavior of other adults around your child.**

Be concerned about:
- Adults focused on child relationships more than adult relationships.
- Adults singling out certain children for attention.

## Teach Personal Safety Rules

Introduce touching rules along with other safety rules.

Talk about the rules often and practice them with your child.

Agree on family touching rules to use with other children and adults. Decide how you will teach these rules based on your child's age, developmental level, and your own family values. For example, you could say to your child:
- *If someone is touching you and you want him or her to stop, say words that mean "No"(like "I don't like that" or "Stop that"). Then he or she needs to stop. If you are touching someone and he or she says "No," you need to stop.*
- *A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy. No one should touch your penis, vulva, vagina, or bottom except to keep you clean and healthy. If someone does, say words that mean "No." Then get away and tell a grown-up.*
- *Do not keep secrets about touching.*

© 2001 Committee for Children

## Discuss Touching Safety

Answer your child's questions.
- Take advantage of natural teaching moments.
- Give age-appropriate answers.

Be approachable. Tell your child:
- *If you ever have any questions, just ask me.*
- *It's never too late to tell.*

Read a children's book about touching safety together.

Start a conversation with your child:
- *Let's review the Touching Rule today.*
- *Before you go, let's practice what you would do if someone tried to break the Touching Rule.*

## Respond to Disclosure

Remain calm.

Reassure your child by saying:
- *I'm glad you told me.*
- *It's not your fault.*
- *I am always here for you.*

Seek help for your child and yourself. Possible resources include the following:
- Law enforcement personnel.
- Child Protective Services.
- Crisis hotline.
- Supportive friends and relatives.
- Professional counselors.

Remember, healing takes time.

### Where to call for help

**CPS** _____

**Police** _____

**Crisis Hotline** _____